

**U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management
Royal Gorge Field Office
3028 E. Main Street
Canon City, CO 81212**

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-F020-2015-0070 CX

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER (optional):

PROJECT NAME: Point Barr Road Temporary Emergency Closure

PLANNING UNIT: Eco-Subregion 1

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T 49 N, R 10 E SEC. 28, SEC. 29 NE ¼, NE ¼

APPLICANT: Bureau of Land Management, Royal Gorge Field Office

BACKGROUND: Heavy rains have resulted in damage to BLM Road 5969 making it unsafe for motorized travel. The BLM is temporarily closing this road which is found in western Fremont County approximately 10 miles east of Salida, CO. BLM engineers estimate the repair costs could amount to approximately \$90,000. Due to the unsafe conditions for motorized vehicles, The BLM road provides western access to the Point Barr Recreation and Public Purpose (R&PP) lease area that is co-managed by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), a partner of the BLM in the management of the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area (AHRA).

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION The proposed action is to place a temporary emergency closure on BLM Road 5969 to prevent motorized travel along a portion of the road (see Figures 1 & 2) where heavy rains have damaged and washed away the road. For example, Figures 3 & 4 show a portion of a retention wall that has been washed away making it unsafe to travel across. The road will be closed to motorized use; however, foot, bicycle and horse use will continue to be allowed. Currently, Fremont County has posted a road closed sign on Fremont County 7 just prior to the transition to BLM Road 5969. The BLM will post closure signs at a location that will allow vehicles to turn around safely. The BLM is exploring options for repairing the road to conditions safe for motorized travel, but no timetable for repairs are available. Portions of the road may be opened as repairs are completed.

Figure1. Map of the General Location of the Point Barr Road Closure

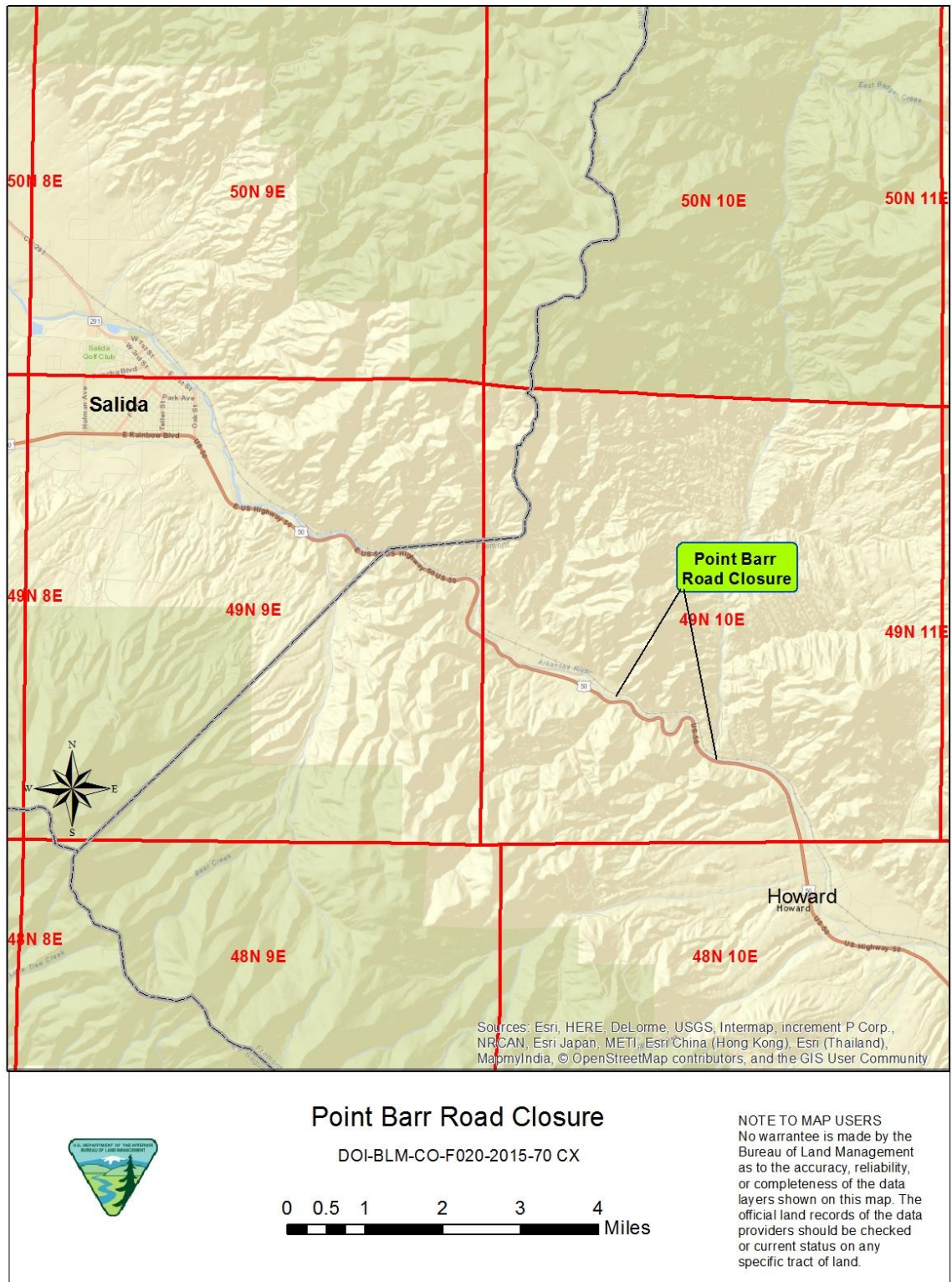
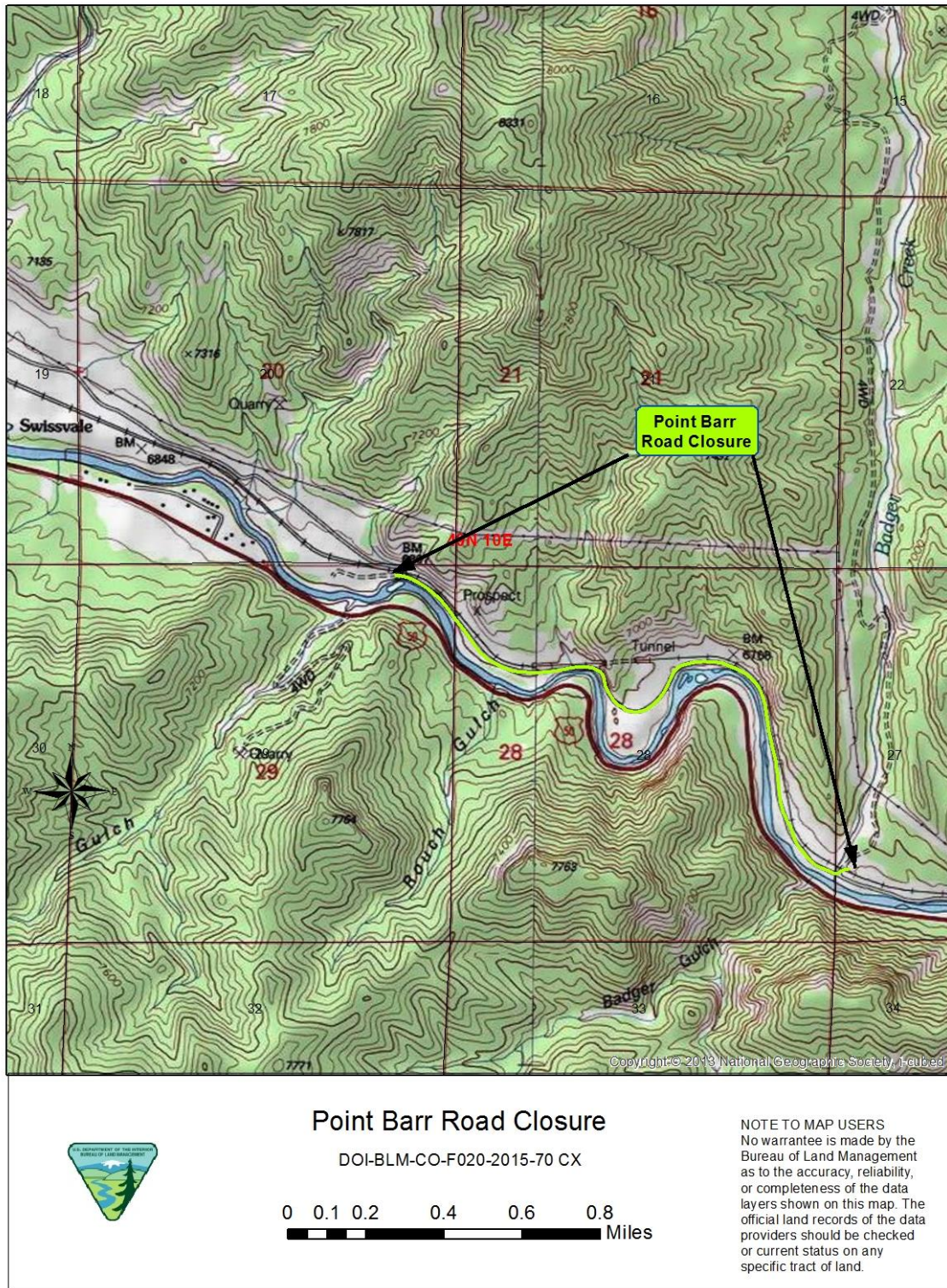


Figure 2. Map of Specific Location of the Point Barr Road Closure





Figures 3 & 4. Photos Showing Damage to the Retaining Wall

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW:

Name of Plan: Royal Gorge Resource Management Plan

Date Approved: May – 1996

Decision Number: C-106

Decision Language: Implement an active signing/barricading program on road closures and problem areas.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW: This proposed action is listed as a Categorical Exclusion in DOI Departmental Manual Part 516 Chapter 11G (3): Transportation, Temporary closure of roads and trails. None of the following exceptions in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2, apply.

Exclusion Criteria	YES	NO
1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		x
2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; lands with wilderness characteristics; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		x
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.		x
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		x
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		x
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		x
7. Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.		x
8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		x
9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		x
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations.		x
11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites.		x

12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species.		x
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INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM REVIEW			
NAME	TITLE	AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	Initials/date
Lara Duran	Wildlife Biologist	Terrestrial Wildlife, T&E, Migratory Birds	LD, 9/16/2015
Jeff Williams	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland	JW, 09/15/2015
Dave Gilbert	Fisheries Biologist	Aquatic Wildlife, Riparian/Wetlands	DG, 9/15/15
Stephanie Carter	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology, Waste Hazardous or Solid	SSC, 9/17/15
John Smeins	Hydrologist	Hydrology, Water Quality/Rights, Soils	JS, 9/17/15
Ty Webb	Prescribed Fire Specialist	Air Quality	TW, 9/29/15
Dave Parker	Cadastral Surveyor	Cadastral Survey	DP 9/21/2015
John Nahomenuk	River Manager	Recreation, Wilderness, LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers	JN, 9/11/15
Ken Reed	Forester	Forestry	KR, 9/17/15
Monica Weimer	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American	MMW, 9/15/15
Greg Valladares	Realty Specialist	Realty	GDV, 09/24/2015
Steve Cunningham	Law Enforcement Ranger	Law Enforcement	SC 9/18/15
TBD	Fire Management Officer	Fire	TW, 9/29/15

REMARKS:

Recreation: BLM Road 5969 is accessed from the west by continuing on Fremont County Road 7 after crossing the Arkansas River at the Wellsville Bridge. This approach serves as the main access to the BLM Point Barr Gold Panning area. This panning area is located within the Point Barr R&PP area that is co-managed by CPW, a partner of the BLM in the management of the AHRA. The facilities that exist on the R&PP lease include a single hole CXT restroom, 6 metal fire rings and some interpretive, regulatory and directional signs. Road access to this panning area is also available from the east by crossing the Arkansas River in Howard, CO and then driving west on Fremont County Road 45 to the public lands. This access requires vehicles to cross Badger Creek and is not recommended by the BLM. In addition, after crossing Badger Creek, a portion of the road from the east has a low point where the river covers a small portion of the road when river flows are above 1,000 (CFS). Other activities occurring at Point Barr include fishing, camping and picnicking. Motorized access to these recreation activities would be temporarily lost during this road closure.

Cultural Resources: The road is Site 5FN1950, the Cañon City – Salida Road, and is eligible for the NRHP (see Report CR-RG-04-13 P). Road closures, in general, benefit historic properties, by preventing vehicle access. In the present case, the integrity of the segment of the road that comprises the area of potential effect (5FN1950.2) has been severely compromised, in part, by both modern impingements (e.g., a guardrail, a modern supporting wall) and water erosion. Therefore, the road closure will not actually benefit the historic property, but neither will it adversely affect 5FN1950.2.

Native American Religious Concerns: No possible traditional cultural properties were located during the cultural resources inventory (see above). There is no other known evidence that suggests the project area holds special significance for Native Americans.

Threatened, Endangered and Proposed Species: There would be no effect on any threatened, endangered or proposed species listed for Chaffee County.

Lands and Realty: There are three rights-of-way in the vicinity of the proposed action:

COC-24845 – Aerial telephone cable, Qwest Corporation.

COC-66417 – Road right-of-way for access to powerlines, Sangre de Cristo Electric Association

COC-67073 – Interpretive signs, Fremont County.

The RGFO is communicating the details of this closure to ROW holders and will coordinate access with these parties to avoid impacts to authorized uses from the proposed action.

COMPLIANCE PLAN (optional):

NAME OF PREPARER: John P. Nahomenuk

SUPERVISORY REVIEW: Josh Sidon

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Martin Weimer

DATE: 10/1/15

DECISION AND RATIONALE: I have reviewed this Categorical Exclusion and have decided to implement the Proposed Action.

This action is listed in the Department Manual as an action that may be categorically excluded. I have evaluated the action relative to the 10 criteria listed above and have determined that it does not represent an exception and is, therefore, categorically excluded from further environmental analysis.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: /s/ Keith E. Berger
Keith E. Berger, Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 10/2/15